

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Seizes \$1 Million in Illicit Bail Money

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Aug. 3, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the seizure of \$1 million from a defendant who tried to post a cash bond in that amount with bags of money believed to be illegal drug smuggling proceeds.

Armando Molina-Gamboa, 43, of Phoenix remains in custody after Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Thomas W. O'Toole found that the money was illegally obtained, and if accepted by the court, the bond could not guarantee Molina-Gamboa would appear at future hearings.

The money was seized after Judge O'Toole conducted a *Nebbia* hearing, a rarely held proceeding that seeks to determine if bond money put up by a defendant has been illegally acquired. Two bail bondsmen testified that the money was brought to their office on five different occasions. The money – including thousands of \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills – was given to the bail bonds agency in duffel bags, computer bags and a cardboard box. The money was in bundles held together with rubber bands. One of the bail bondsmen testified that it took more than 30 hours to count the money.

In making his decision, O'Toole concluded that the manner in which the money was presented to the bail bondsmen provided evidence that it had been illegally obtained.

"I have long been concerned that some defendants use illegally obtained funds to make bail, and as a result, become serious flight risks," Goddard said. "We applaud the court for taking the highly unusual step of looking carefully into the source of the money."

Molina-Gamboa is in custody after being charged with two counts of possession of a narcotic drug for sale, conspiracy, illegal enterprise, money laundering and misconduct with a weapon. He was indicted by the State Grand Jury in June.

Following O'Toole's decision, Judge James Keppel authorized a seizure warrant for the \$1 million, which was transferred from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. Assistant Attorney General Paula Alleman is prosecuting this case.

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